

DHS OUTREACH

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IMA Celebrates 10,000th TANF Recipient to Become Employed

US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Deputy Assistant Secretary of Administration for Children and Families Martin Dannenfelser, joined Mayor Anthony Williams, Department of Human Services (DHS) Director Yvonne Gilchrist, and Kate Jesberg, Administrator of the Income Maintenance Administration (IMA), in recognizing Shakisa Taylor, the 10,000th Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipient to become employed following participation in IMA's TANF Employment Program (TEP), a welfare-to-work initiative.

"Taking steps toward self sufficiency is often not easy, but you are representing 10,000 families doing the same thing," said Dannenfelser.

Mayor Williams praised IMA's TEP program for its success in placing 10,000 TANF recipients in jobs and for achieving a job retention rate of 80 percent.

"The federal government ranked the District's welfare-to-work program in the top ten in the nation for success in the work force," Williams said. "The strong performance of the TANF Employment Program has proven that many TANF recipients want a job to become self-sufficient and just need encouragement and access to job skill training and education. Shakisa Taylor is a fine example." *Continues on page 6*



Mayor Williams presents Shakisa Taylor with a bouquet of flowers.

Unemployed Fathers Get Jobs Through DC Fatherhood Initiative

Sixteen fathers receiving assistance through the DC Fatherhood Initiative are starting new jobs thanks to the program's involvement with the Georgia Avenue/Rock Creek East Family Support Collaborative. The men were recently placed into jobs with Office Movers, a local moving and storage company with operations throughout the Mid-Atlantic region.

The Georgia Avenue Collaborative, one of the youngest of seven initiatives with the Healthy Families Thriving Communities Collaborative, is a neighborhood-based organization that nurtures families to keep children safe from abuse and neglect. Part of its mission includes establishing relationships with businesses and agencies to find employment for men who have had difficulty finding work.

"The bottom line is many of these fathers have gone to prison but have taken courses, received certificates, and have skills," said James Cunningham, community resources manager. "We tell prospective employers that we can provide them with skilled labor; people who want to work. A lot of convicts feel they have strikes against them, so they end up becoming the best employees." *Continues on page 6*

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Please direct your comments about the DHS newsletter to **Outreach!**



CVS to Provide Photo Processing Jobs for Mentally Retarded

CVS/Pharmacy One Hour Photo Processing Labs and New Vision Photography, Inc., announced a unique partnership last month to provide training and photo processing jobs for graduates of New Vision.

New Vision is a treatment center, which teaches digital camera photography to adults with developmental disabilities.

The announcement was made in the auditorium of Martin Luther King, Jr., Library in downtown Washington, DC, where 10 New Vision students participated in an emotion-filled graduation ceremony.

"I've been touched today by the work of so many," said an emotional CVS/Pharmacy Regional Vice President Lester Dillow. "This relationship has provided us with an avenue to partner and emphasize skills rather than focus on limitations."

New Vision students will receive nine weeks of training at two CVS training centers located at 4049 South Capitol Street in Southwest and 4555 Wisconsin Avenue, NW.

Once complete, the students will be employed as photo lab assistants. New Vision will provide the supportive services and job coaching to make sure each student is successful in his or her employment.



CVS Area Vice President Gordon Howard, CVS Manager of Government Programs Olivia Biggs, New Vision CEO Al Price, MRDDA Community Based Specialist John Ross, CVS Regional Vice President Lester Dillow, and MRDDA Administrator Dale Brown.

IMA Administrator Wins Cafritz



Kate Jesberg is presented with the award by Calvin Cafritz, chairman of The Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation.

More than 300 guests attended the Cafritz Award reception, held at George Washington University's Marvin Center in December. Kate Jesberg, administrator of the Income Maintenance Administration (IMA), was among 2004's five District government employees honored with the prestigious award given for exemplary government service.

The annual award, which is made possible by a grant from the Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation, is administered by the George Washington University Center for Excellence in Public Leadership (CEPL). CEPL is a training and research center focused on leadership and management in the public sector. Its mission is to develop public leaders who make a positive difference in their organizations and the lives of the people they serve.

Jesberg, a 22-year District government employee, has been credited with helping to reform TANF, the District's welfare program. When Jesberg took the reins at IMA six years ago, the District was in a major financial crisis. Today, IMA's outstanding performance has made the District the most highly awarded jurisdiction in the nation for monetary bonus awards from the federal government.

"This award is clearly indicative of a much larger team effort here at IMA," said Jesberg, who, along with the other winners, also received a \$7,500 cash award that she intends to donate to the nonprofit agencies that work closely with IMA.

"Together, we've tried to build a program that instills dignity and respect. With that philosophy, we've been able to succeed."

FSA Provides More Shelter Space for Homeless Men

The DHS Family Services Administration (FSA) renovated the second floor of the Homeless Assistance Center at 1355-1357 New York Avenue, NE, to provide more shelter space for homeless men. The renovation work resulted in space for 200 additional men, bringing the Center's total capacity to 360.



DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist at 801 East Building Shelter for Men with Charles McCimmon, the shelter's program manager.

FSA also increased the availability of shelter for homeless men by developing the 801 East Building, located on the campus of St.

Elizabeth's Hospital, into a shelter for 334 homeless men. Located at 2700 Martin Luther King, Jr. Avenue, SE, the 801 East Building previously housed DHS headquarters, but has been



Interior of an individual room at the 801 East Shelter.

transformed into a spacious shelter with a kitchen, dining room, meeting room, showers and bathrooms, laundry area, and classroom space.

The 801 East Building shelter also has 50 individual rooms for men in the shelter's transitional recovery program, which provides a structured living environment for homeless men who are committed to recovery from substance abuse or alcohol addiction. Space is also available for a reading and library area, and there are rooms where counselors can meet privately with shelter occupants.

Bright Spaces Developed for Homeless Children In Family Shelters

DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist, senior officials from Bright Horizons Foundation for Children, Johnson & Johnson, and from the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness celebrated the opening of Bright Spaces, colorful play areas designed for children, at two shelters: DC Village and Virginia Williams Resource Center shelter. Early childhood educators from Bright Horizons DC area child care centers also will volunteer their time to work with the homeless children at these shelters.

Bright Horizons Foundation is the nonprofit arm of Bright Horizons Family Solutions, a leading provider of employer-sponsored childcare, early education, and work/life solutions. The Foundation established the Bright Spaces program to create dedicated play and learning areas for children of all ages living in shelters for homeless families.

The Bright Spaces concept features curtains, cozy nooks strategically placed around the room, and shelves filled with award-winning children's books, educational toys, and soft toys. Johnson & Johnson partnered with the Bright Horizons Foundation, *continues on page 6*



Jasmine rings up a purchase for her dad on a toy cash register in a "Bright Space" at DC Village.

DC Government Agencies Unite to Better Identify Children with Developmental Delays

DCChildFind



In January, the DHS Office of Early Childhood Development (OECD), DC Public Schools (DCPS), and other agencies, signed a historic agreement to create a network of integrated public and private services to identify and evaluate children from birth through 21 years of age who are suspected of having a disability or developmental delay.

Child Find will allow participating agencies in the District to identify and evaluate infants, toddlers, and school age children, who may have developmental delays to provide early intervention and special education services that are specified by law.

DHS and DCPS signed a formal agreement to work in partnership for the first time ever, in an effort to provide seamless services for children with disabilities.

"There are children with disabilities that are going undiagnosed and that will have a huge impact on their future performance," said OECD Child Find Coordinator Tammy Proctor, adding that doctors often fail to diagnose a developmental disability in a child who is late walking or talking, or doing other normal activities. Often times the parent is told: "He'll grow out of it."

Beginning this spring, the program will conduct training for school principals and counselors to increase awareness of how parents and their children can access the system and be properly diagnosed.

"Many people don't know the process for getting their child evaluated," said Proctor. "Child Find will make those who work with our children more knowledgeable and responsive to meeting the needs of children with developmental delays and disabilities."

IMA Change Center Creates Convenience, May Also Improve Error Rating

The Income Maintenance Administration (IMA) has established a multi-lingual call center operation that allows customers to quickly and easily report household or other changes that may impact their services. Previously, customers had to visit IMA offices to make these changes. This customer friendly service—known as the "Change Center"—is available in 140 languages to all IMA customers, receiving TANF, Food Stamps, and medical assistance.

"It makes sense to offer this kind of service," said IMA Administrator Kate Jesberg. "Now our customers won't have to take time off their jobs or pay for transportation or childcare just to make these changes."

Customers who call the Change Center, which operates from 7:30am to 5:30pm, can report changes over the phone, and also fax or mail any additional information IMA requires. IMA has also established kiosks in each of its offices where customers can contact the Change Center and even fax information.

The Change Center is expected to further improve the District's Food Stamp error rate, a measure that reflects IMA's ability to accurately determine the amount of Food Stamp benefits available to individuals and families. The District's error rate, which has improved drastically, is now at 5.51 percent, equal to the national average.



DHS Director Yvonne Gilchrist cuts ribbon to officially open the IMA Change Center in February. IMA Administrator Kate Jesberg, Jason Shedlock from Council Committee on Human Services Chairman Adrian Fenty's office, and senior IMA staff participated in the ribbon cutting.

MRDDA Website Nominated for Prestigious Harvard Award

The activities calendar portion of the Mental Rehabilitation and Developmental Disabilities Administration's (MRDDA) website was nominated recently for a Harvard University, Kennedy School of Government Innovations in American Government Award. The site, which can be found at [MRDDA](#), lists more than 100 free or inexpensive District activities, with detailed information about wheelchair access, handicapped parking, stairs, ramps, sign language and audio interpreters, touch tours, closest Metro station/lines, etc.

Informally titled "It's Hot, It's Cool, It's Fun, and It's (almost always) Free," the activities calendar is designed to make residents and visitors with disabilities feel welcome to explore the exciting sites and events the District has to offer. The site has received more than half a million visitors since its launch in July 2003, and receives an average of about 20,000 visitors each month.

The Harvard Program is a significant force in identifying and promoting excellence and creativity in the public sector. The Innovations in American Government Award is granted to just five recipients each year.

"We are proud that what started as a service for our clients has found a city-wide audience and has been nationally recognized by what is one of the most prestigious awards in government," said MRDDA Administrator Dale Brown.

Innovations Award winners receive a grant of \$100,000, national press attention, serve as examples of model programs worthy of replication, and spark research and teaching cases at the Kennedy School and other schools across the country.

Emergency Planning Forum for People with Disabilities Draws Large Crowd

The Mayor's Committee on Persons with Disabilities brought together local and federal emergency-related government agencies, and nearly 300 residents, for a special forum held in December at Gallaudet University's Kellogg Center. The interactive forum was primarily for DC residents with disabilities, their caregivers, advocates, and interested citizens, to hear and discuss the District's citywide emergency plans.

"We should never be in a situation where a person is in danger of losing their life simply because they're disabled," said Alan Clive, Civil Rights Program Manager for the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"We are developing courses for emergency representatives regarding emergency preparedness and people with disabilities. By next year, everybody will be able to go online and take these classes."

The forum, which was opened by Committee Chair Steve Gorman, also featured Dr. Phil Terry, executive director of the National Capital Area of the American Red Cross; Carl Cameron, president of the Inclusion Research Institute and Deputy Fire Marshal Kenneth Watts.

"The purpose of the forum was to bring planners together with the disability committee," said Gorman, adding that the Committee plans more forums on emergency preparedness.

"If the planners have created effective outreach to include the disability community in its emergency plans, we've done what we set out to accomplish," he said.

Residents came armed with a list of questions and concerns for the experts. DC native Debra Matthews came to find answers to calm her concerns about her brother, who is mentally ill.

"We're close to the Capitol so I wanted to know what to do if something happens," said Matthews. "They're saying to evacuate but we don't know where to go."



Alan Clive addresses a full house at Gallaudet, while Deputy Fire Marshal Kenneth Watts and Michele Penick of the DC EMA look on.

DHS Brought Christmas Holiday Cheer to Needy Children and Homeless Families

Taylor, a DC elementary school student, was one of 250 students to receive free bicycles and other gifts when DHS gave away more than 2,000 toys during a December holiday celebration. The gifts were made possible by the generous donations made by DHS employees and the US Marines Toys for Tots Campaign.



Bright Spaces Developed for Homeless Children In Family Shelters *Continued from page 3*

the Department of Human Services, and the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness to develop two Bright Spaces areas at DC Village. There are currently 67 Bright Spaces play areas at family shelters in 22 states throughout the country.

The average monthly number of homeless children residing at DC Village is 125, except during hypothermia season when the number significantly increases. DHS manages the District's program to assist the homeless and funds the operation of DC Village, the Virginia Williams Resource Center (the central intake office for all families seeking emergency assistance and shelter in the District), and other shelters throughout the city.

Unemployed Fathers Get Jobs through Participation in DC Fatherhood Initiative

The fathers employed by Office Movers were pre-screened by Cunningham and Fatherhood Outreach Worker Thomas Woodson. The men were then enrolled into a workshop designed to answer questions, provide interview tips and an overview of employer expectations, and the importance of reliability, punctuality, and accountability.

The Fatherhood Initiative originally selected 25 men for temporary employment at Office Movers. The 16 who were retained were hired into fulltime, permanent positions. The other nine candidates will receive further pre-employment training and continued placement assistance through the Collaborative.

The George Avenue Collaborative holds contracts with numerous government agencies throughout the District, including the Pentagon and the Rayburn House Office Building. It is also establishing relationships with a local airline company as well as partnerships with the Urban League and Citibank in an effort to provide jobs and services for more fathers through the DC Fatherhood Initiative.

"Now we don't have a bunch of guys running the streets because they can't meet their needs in the proper way," said Woodson. "We're helping to reunite families, which is what the initiative is all about."

IMA Celebrates 10,000th TANF Recipient to become Employed *Continued from page 1*

Taylor lives with her parents, who were unable to provide support for her and her one-year-old son. She received TANF for one year before getting job training in nursing through participation in IMA's TEP program. Taylor now works as a nurse's aide at a local nursing home.

"Some people doubted me but I never doubted myself," Taylor said. "I never expected to stay on welfare and I'm going to continue working hard to stay self sufficient."